

COMPUTER ^{User} _{News}

Monthly Publication of the Kentucky-Indiana Personal Computer Users Group

October 2006 Volume 25, No. 10

KIPCUG

Presents

Microsoft's

Newest Operating System,

VISTA

October 3, 2006

Following the Ice Cream Social

at 6:00 PM

General Public is invited to attend.
Free Program Starts at 6:30 PM
Directions - Page 3

www.kipcug.org

KIPCUG

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Half Page (3 col x 5")	140.00
Full Page	250.00

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Ad sizes must be in full column width and in one inch depth increments.

Discount	Rate
Three consecutive insertions	10%
Twelve consecutive insertions	20%
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KENTUCKY-INDIANA PERSONAL COMPUTER USERS GROUP, INC.

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Submissions

Articles should be submitted as a **Word document** and submitted one month in advance. If graphics are included, they should be submitted in TIF file format whenever possible. All graphics must be converted to TIF or PDF file formats before publication.

Supporters

*Please support them with
your business*

The vendors listed have contributed hardware or software to KIPCUG to assist in production of the organization's monthly magazine. We encourage you to support these vendors who are helping to support KIPCUG.

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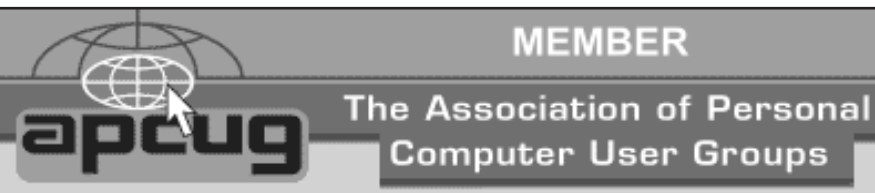
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Advertising materials must be submitted four weeks prior to publication. Editorial submissions must be submitted three weeks prior to publication.

All editorial materials submitted become the property of KIPCUG, and may be used by the organization in any way deemed appropriate by the magazine staff and the Board of Directors of KIPCUG.

The editors reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary to any editorial matter submitted or to refuse publication of any material submitted.

Direct all magazine correspondence to the Editor at KIPCUG, 291 N. Hubbards Lane, Suite B-26-318, Louisville, KY 40207 or to editor@kipcug.org.



KIPCUG is a member of APCUG, an international association of computer user groups. Information is available at www.apcug.org

Over the Program Director's Shoulder

By Wayne Perkey, KIPCUG

October

October is shaping up to be an exciting month for KIPCUG. Keith Stenger will be previewing Microsoft's much touted new OS, Vista.

Windows Vista introduces a breakthrough user experience that is designed to help you feel confident in your ability to view, find, and organize information, and to control your computing experience.

The visual sophistication of Windows Vista helps streamline your computing experience by refining common window elements so you can better focus on the content on the screen rather than on how to access it. The desktop experience is more informative, intuitive, and helpful. New tools bring better clarity to the information on your computer, so you can see what your files contain without opening them; find applications and files instantly; navigate efficiently among open windows; and use wizards and dialog boxes more confidently.

Matt Mercurio will be taking on the Back to Basics presentation. He will be showing us the basics to an exciting new form of communication, Podcasting. Many of you may be familiar with this form of video and radio programming over the web. Matt will teach us all we need to get started building your own media empire!

In addition to these exciting presentations, we have two pre-program events! Hostaroo has graciously offered to host an ice cream social. Come on out early and enjoy some ice cream while socializing with your fellow KIPCUG members. This is a great time to bring along a guest.

October is also your chance to help KIPCUG with its community outreach program. We are hosting a recycling program. Bring in all your unwanted PC's and PC peripherals. KIPCUG has a long running outreach SIG, directed by Bob Setree. We are expanding that program to include an educational portion, for people in need. We are beginning with The Healing Place (www.thehealingplace.org). Students will take classes lead by KIPCUG volunteers. When they complete their training, they get to take a PC home with them. So do your part to spread technology to the disadvantaged, and bring us your old PC, monitors, printers, etc. You can help us better society, and get a tax write off as well!

We have a terrific surprise raffle item, and of course door prizes and more! You have to be present to win the cash prize, so come on out in October, and bring a friend. See you there!

Back to Basics Topic

**Podcasting
by
Matt Mercurio**

September

Thanks to Brian Miller for his presentation at last month's General Meeting on Microsoft Windows Defender Beta 2 and Microsoft Windows Live OneCare.

SIG Director Charley May presented Back to Basics with a refresher on faxing through Windows. There was a good time had by all!

MEETING DIRECTIONS

Christ Church United Methodist
4614 Brownsboro Road

From I-264 (Watterson X-Way) take the US-42/Brownsboro Road exit number 22 turning left onto Brownsboro Road if you were traveling East on I-264 (turn right instead if you were traveling West on I-264). Continue for about 0.6 miles turning left at the traffic light at Blankenbaker Lane and turn left into the Church parking lot. Look for the signs.

Maps are at www.ccum.net and www.kipcug.org

**WERE YOU THERE?
ON SEPTEMBER 5
THE NAME DRAWN WAS
DEBRA REYNOLDS
AND SHE WAS NOT IN
ATTENDANCE**

**NEXT MONTH
THE PRIZE WILL BE
\$40.**

WILL YOU BE THERE?

September General Meeting

By George Buehler, KIPCUG

The September 5 General Meeting started with User to User, hosted by stand in Wayne Perkey. There were 9 questions from the audience (a number from anonymous). The questions covered everything from eliminating a spy ware program to how to keep students from by-passing the installed firewall.

The back to basics section, conducted by the venerable Charley May, detailed set up of a little known feature of Windows called "Windows Faxing". After going through the PowerPoint presentation detailing how to do the internal set up of the applet, Charley tried to send a test fax. Even though Charley had over 200 feet of telephone cable, he had to take his portable to the back of the room to "plug in". To test the program set up, Charley sent a test fax to the church fax machine.

After a few minutes - the church fax had a paper jam and several other faxes had to print - the test print came through showing the success of the applet set up. The program can be set up to receive faxes also. So, if you need a fax machine or you don't have space on your desk for more techno-stuff, you should try this. And best of all - it's free!

President, Bill Buzan and Vice President, John Henderson, made separate requests for both equipment and man (woman) power to help collect, refurbish, and distribute computer equipment. The recipients of the equipment will be orphanages, The Healing Place, etc. Bill also made a request for help in teaching the basics to the people receiving the equipment. Anyone who has spare equipment should bring it to the meeting.

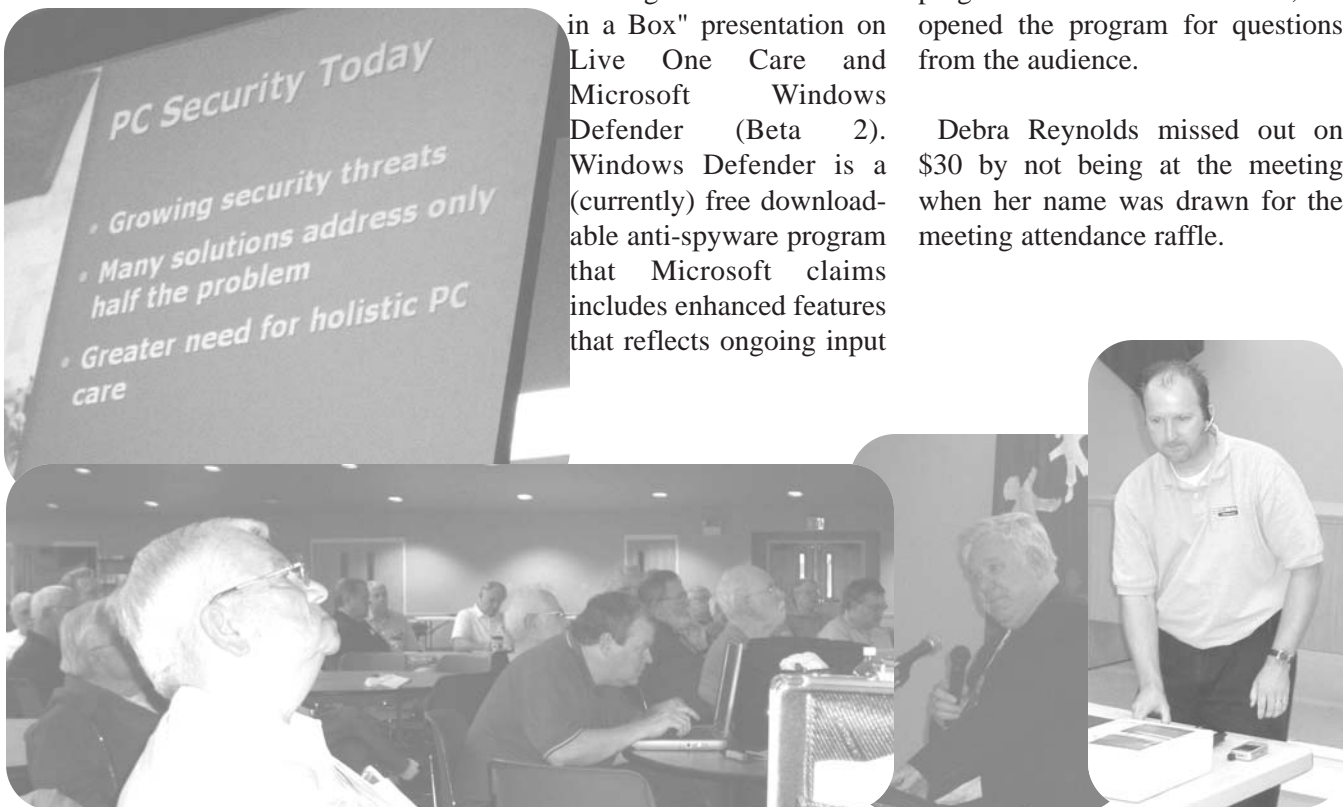
Brian Miller gave his "Microsoft in a Box" presentation on Live One Care and Microsoft Windows Defender (Beta 2). Windows Defender is a (currently) free downloadable anti-spyware program that Microsoft claims includes enhanced features that reflects ongoing input

from customers. It has regular updates for the spyware definitions.

Live One Care is a Microsoft subscription service from Microsoft that includes an antivirus scanning engine, a two-way firewall, a performance tune-up, and a backup and restore feature. Live One Care uses the Windows Defender engine to protect against spyware. Microsoft reports that the antivirus scanning engine is updated regularly to protect your system. The performance tune-up automatically defragments, cleans and compresses temporary files and installs operating system updates. The subscription service is available for \$49 per year but has a 90 day free trial. Several members from the audience stated that they have found the program connected with "instant" and mail in rebates.

After Brian explained how the program worked in his trials, he opened the program for questions from the audience.

Debra Reynolds missed out on \$30 by not being at the meeting when her name was drawn for the meeting attendance raffle.



A Lot of Assembly Required

By Karen Rhodes, Honorary Member of the Rochester Computer Society, Inc., <http://www.rcsi.org>

My computer died. It was old, in computer terms, and the motherboard had had it. It wasn't much of a task to get my data files off before it completely went west, as I keep most of my data on Zip disks or USB portable drives. But it was time for me to get a new computer.

It isn't my first choice to go to Gateway or Dell or Hewlett-Packard and buy an already-assembled machine. First, I want on my computer only the software I will be using, not some techie-nerd's idea of the latest "in" thing. Second, I don't want to have to go round and round with someone on the other end of a telephone about what components are available. The bottom line is that I want what I want when I want it, and nothing more - or less.

My preference for assembling is made much easier by having someone in-house who is experienced at it - my husband, who is a computer specialist. He does everything; he installs hardware, software, LANs, the whole works. There are some things he doesn't know, but he knows enough to be able to put together a computer -- one that works. He did it before, for himself and for others, on the job and at home.

He did the shopping for me because I get lost when it comes to putting one part of the computer in concert with another, and knowing what is more likely to work with what. You notice I said "more likely"; there never is a guarantee that it's all going to work once you get it together!

Having done business with Newegg.com before, he settled on them. He gave me a list of recommendations. I ordered; the next week, we had all the parts. That next Saturday, after breakfast, the assembly began.

I'll go through the process he used, making what I think are some important points to remember (marked by bullets).

- o Don't always settle for the power supply that comes with your case. I ordered a mid-range case, which came with a 350-watt power supply. Probably not enough for my powerful and large genealogy database program and a lot of multi-tasking that will inevitably accompany its use, and certainly not enough for the motherboard I bought, because I also play games for which I bought a powerful graphics card and a muscular motherboard. And the motherboard I ordered states in its manual that it requires a minimum of 400 watts in the power supply. I bought 550 watts.

- o If you do boost the power supply or you live in a hot climate (both apply to me), buy extra case fans. They're inexpensive, and the extra cooling they provide is crucial to computer health.

The case came with one fan installed. My husband put in the two extra case fans first. Then he put in the power supply (Just PC model JPC-550C-12V). Next he put onto the motherboard (EPOX EP-8 NPA

the CPU (AMD Sempron 64 3100+), the memory (Corsair, 1 GB), and the graphics card (MSI NVidia P317). The sound card - sound chip, really - and the Ethernet card are integrated onto the motherboard.

All during the installation, my husband used his digital camera to take pictures of each component and of the process. In addition, for my own file, I made notes of all the model numbers and serial numbers.

- o Document, document, document! You'll be glad you did when a tech support person you're talking to on the phone about your misbehav-



ing computer asks you for the serial number on your hard drive. You'll have the information right in front of you, either in a paper file or in a photograph, and won't have to open up the case and bend yourself into a pretzel to get the serial number off the hard drive!

Meanwhile, back at the installation procedure, when my husband installed the motherboard into the case and tried to hook it up to the power supply, we hit a snag.

- o Understand that the connector

A Lot of Assembly Required (cont.)

on one part which is supposed to connect to another part may not match up and may need an adapter.

In my case - you'll forgive the pun - the power supply connector was 20-pin and the motherboard's corresponding connector had 24 pins. No panic yet - there was an adapter in with the motherboard. But when my husband tried to hook it up at the power-supply end, the connector wouldn't connect. It was mis-manufactured.

- o Understand that there are going to be snags and that you just have to accept them when they happen, and come up with solutions. Cussing is optional.

- o Understand that nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

We live in a rural area, outside of an unincorporated little town in Florida. The nearest city is Jacksonville, up in the next county. It's quite a ways - especially at these gas prices - to go into the city for our needs. We try to avoid it as much as we can. However, there was not another adapter of the type we needed nearby.

The next day, Sunday, my husband and I made a 60-mile round trip into Jacksonville to CompUSA for another adapter. He had been told on the telephone that morning that they had 20 of the item in stock. Fine. We got there, carrying with us the faulty adapter and the case's original 350-watt power supply as a test bed, since it had the same type of connection. Which leads me to:

- o Be prepared. If you need to go to the store to replace a faulty component, take the bad one with you!

Don't try to remember what type, brand, number or placement of pins... you never will. And telephone ahead, and make sure you talk to someone who knows what he's talking about, or should!

We looked all over the store, ending up at a rack right beside a help station. A young woman came to the counter. We asked her about the adapter. Her first answer was the wrong one: "We don't have those." I informed her curtly we had been told over the phone they had 20 of that item in stock. She then gave some lame routine about not having been there long and something about some boxes just having come in. She looked to her left, at the rack where we ended up, and said, pointing, "There they are, right there."

- o Do not take nonsense from store personnel. Speak plainly and to the point. Go to the next level, if you have to, repeating that subroutine as many times as necessary, until you get satisfaction.

We wanted to open the package and see if the adapter therein would fit the power supply. We didn't mind making one 60-mile round trip, but would have been angry to get the new adapter home and find it also didn't fit! The young woman said we'd have to pay for it first, then take it to Customer Service and talk to them about opening and testing it. Hence we went. Two young men confirmed what we'd been told, then gave us a look that said, "Okay, go away." Not me. I took out my money, plunked it down on the counter, and said, "There's my green." I took the receipt, and then we opened the package, took out the adapter, and

tried it. It fit.

- o Always ask for what you want. Be firm, even adamant, about it.

I could have ordered another of the adapters from Newegg.com, I'm sure. But there would have been several days' wait, and I wasn't willing to do that when we could find one near and in a short time. The thing only cost \$7, and I probably would have paid that much just in shipping!

- o Be willing to shell out a little bit more to get what you want when you want it.

Back home, the assembly proceeded: hard drive (Western Digital Caviar RE 160Gb), DVD-RW (LiteOn SHW-160P6S), DVD/CD-ROM (LiteOn SOHD-6P9SV), card reader (Arrow Micro AICR-01), and the old 3.5" floppy drive from my old computer. He set it all up with the monitor (Samsung SyncMaster 740N: I had to treat myself to a flat-panel monitor), the keyboard (LiteOn SK-1688U), and the mouse (Radio Shack optical mouse 26-592, which I already had), and tested it.

It all worked!

I had followed all of my husband's recommendations except for one.

- o Even if someone who knows more than you makes recommendations, check them out and see what you think.

When making my hardware selections, I had gone online to Newegg.com and read the reviews and specifications for the components my husband had picked out. I agreed with all except one: the keyboard. The keyboard he selected

A Lot of Assembly Required (cont.)

was criticized in user reviews for sticking keys (which was why I had trashed my old keyboard) and for having too short a cord. I need a longer cord in my setup, so I selected another keyboard, which I'm happy with.

We set up the machine at my desk. We looked at the BIOS and set it up the way I wanted it, which didn't involve many changes. Then it was time to install Windows XP professional (SP2). It seemed to go well, by all appearances, but we know how deceptive that can be! And it wasn't long until we found out we'd hit another snag. Somehow the OS had set itself up to think the C: drive was a removable drive which had no disk in it, and it wanted to call the hard drive "local drive I:." That would not have worked with some software which insists it be placed on Drive C:. This snag also caused the persistent appearance of an error message telling me that there wasn't a disk present in C: when I knew there jolly well was.

o Murphy loves operating systems! Whatever can go wrong, will.

Here I will make a long story short: we used a software program my husband has (Darik's Boot and Nuke) to wipe the hard drive and start all over again. It took two more tries installing Windows XP Professional before the stupid software decided to give the drives their proper names.

o Be patient, persistent, and courageous when installing software, especially the operating system. It is going to fail a few times before succeeding, trust me!

The computer works well, all

things considered. I am not able to play a couple of my games, for evidently they require Intel rather than AMD chips. I haven't yet, but I'll go to the respective websites and see if there are any patches for us orphaned AMD users!

o No matter how well the installation goes, no matter how well the computer is working, there will still be problems. They're inevitable; get used to it or go back to the mid 20th century!

The important thing is that it will run my genealogy software (The Master Genealogist), word processor (OpenOffice.org), e-mail program (Pegasus), and browser

(Firefox), and other things vital to me. As well, it will run some of my games, so I'm happy with that.

o Once you get it going - enjoy it!

Karen Rhodes is not a techie, but she does appreciate a well-put-together computer. She's had many careers, some of them quite brief, and is currently studying genealogy through the distance learning facilities of the University of Toronto. She lives in Florida with her husband, her younger daughter, and a calico cat named Tiger.

Editor's Note: Karen Rhodes's email is wxtadpole@comcast.net. This article is distributed by the APCUG Editorial Committee.



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Some of Our Volunteers

Membership

By Tom Denning, KIPCUG

Please welcome KIPCUG's newest members.

- ROBERT EMPSON
- BYRON GRAHAM
- HUGH TH MILLER
- JOSEPH FLEMING
- DORIS A MORROW
- SARA DONOHUE
- EDWARD L. FIELDS
- LINDA HORVAT
- LINDA FIELDS

Each new person that you invite to a KIPCUG meeting can earn a FREE month of dues for you if they join as an Individual or Family member! If you liked the Meeting, they will too!

Directory of KIPCUG Leaders

Name	Position	Home	Work	Email Address
Bill Buzan	President	639-7647		president@kipcug.org
John Henderson	Vice-President		812-945-1102	vp@kipcug.org
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Rosemary Viele	Treasurer	452-6878		treasurer@kipcug.org
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Doc Viele	Director	452-6878		aqviele@win.net

For Your Information

Changes for mailing address, email address or telephone numbers should be sent to Tom Denning, Director of Membership. You can send the change to the KIPCUG mailing address printed on the back of this Magazine or by email to membership@kipcug.org. The KIPCUG Membership Renewal Link is on the web page at www.kipcug.org in the "For Your Information" section or you can access it directly at http://www.kipcug.org/payment.htm.

October 2006 KIPUCUG Planner

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KIPCUG Special Interest Group Directory

ACCESS BASIC SIG

Meets at a date and location to be announced. Contact SIG LEADER Alan Birch at ajbirch@bellsouth.net or 429-0506

The SIG uses the tools that are available in Access without programming. Users bring problems and we come up with solutions.

ADVANCED USERS SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 3rd Friday of the month at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact SIG LEADER Tom Scanlan at 1-502-477-1639 or tpscan@iglou.com

The SIG explores software and hardware topics of interest to people who are very comfortable with their computer and want to know even more. We encourage everyone to share their experiences so we can all learn and grow into areas we would not normally explore on our own.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SIG

Meets on the 4th Friday of specified months at Advanced Grinding and Machine Inc, 4644 Illinois Avenue. Contact TEAM MEMBER Beverly Setree at 452-9851 or beverly@advanced-grinding.com

This SIG takes donations of computer equipment and restores them to working condition. These computers can then be distributed to people in need, providing a valuable service to the community. We are always looking for donations. We also welcome people willing to help restore computers for distribution.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 4th Tuesday of the month at the LFPL-Bon Air Regional, 2816 Del Rio Place. Contact SIG DIRECTOR Charley May at sig@win.net or 773-7155

This SIG examines software and hardware topics that will make your photographic efforts more fun and rewarding. Members at any level of experience and with any type of digital camera are welcome. Please bring your camera, manual, photo CD and special soft-

ware. We will all increase our ability to understand digital photography.

EXCEL BASIC SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 2nd Monday of the month at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact SIG LEADER Jim Boneck at jboneck@yahoo.com

This SIG starts with questions about home or work projects or last month's material. Feel free to bring your data or existing spreadsheet. We present new material and the opportunity to practice this material. The computer lab has computers for your use, but some people bring their laptops so they can practice and ask questions about their particular situation.

GENEALOGY SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 3rd Monday of the month at the LFPL-Eline Branch at St. Matthews City Hall Building at the corner of Grandview Ave. and Fairfax Ave. about 3 blocks south of Shelbyville Rd. SIG LEADER Susan Moore at 499-5222, mooresk@win.net www.genealogy-family.com

The Genealogy SIG has presentations on the use of The Master Genealogist software. TMG is a full-featured database that can help you organize, research and publish your family history. Each session has a short Q&A. For presentations check genealogy-family.com. Interactive census forms are also available on this site.

GENEALOGY II SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the LFPL-Jeffersontown Branch, 10635 Watterson Trail. Contact SIG LEADER Susan Moore at 499-5222 or mooresk@win.net

The Genealogy II SIG also helps you to understand The Master Genealogist software; however this SIG utilizes a Q&A format. You bring the questions and we can usually provide the answers. Having trouble with your TMG program on your laptop - bring it with you. We have plenty of room to setup your computer and check-out your problem.

KIPCUG Special Interest Group Directory (cont.)

HANDS ON SIG

Meets 2:00 PM the 4th Saturday of the month at the LFPL-Eline Branch at St. Matthews City Hall Building at the corner of Grandview Ave. & Fairfax Ave. 3 blocks south of Shelbyville Rd. Contact Co-SIG LEADERS Charley May at sig@win.net or Grant McCormick at gmccormick@win.net or Tom McArdle at usersig@insightbb.com

This is a chance to find some assistance and learn more about your PC. We will work with you to get your machine back up and running at top speed. We can help you build/upgrade your own PC. You need to bring your complete system, monitor, keyboard, mouse, cables and processor. Members with repair experience are encouraged to drop in and help.

HARDWARE SIG

Meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of the month at the LFPL-Eline Branch at St. Matthews City Hall Building, the corner of Grandview Ave./Fairfax Ave. 3 blocks south of Shelbyville Rd. Contact Co-SIG LEADERS Grant McCormick at gmccormick@win.net or Charley May at sig@win.net or 773-7155

We can help you expand the capabilities of your existing system. Learn how to add your own hard drive, audio or video card, memory module, DVD burner or build your own computer from the ground up. Learn the tips and techniques necessary for a successful hardware upgrade.

INTERMEDIATE USERS SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 4th Monday of the month at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact SIG LEADER Jim Travelstead at jim.travelstead@louisville.edu or 852-4761(W), 375-4796(H)

The SIG focuses on various versions of MS Windows software, its features, methods of operation, and problems along with hints and tips. This SIG is for users who are comfortable with the daily use of their computer, have mastered their fear of computers, and are willing to push the envelope a little.

INVESTING SIG

Meets 6:30 PM the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Louisville Aero Club, Bowman Field. SIG LEADER Doc Viele at 452-6878

Meetings consist of round table information exchanges on any economic subject of current interest. Questions and presentations are encouraged. Each meeting will include general information on investing and the usual information exchange. This is not an investment club; they DO NOT discuss mutual funds.

NEW USERS DAYTIME SIG

Meets 2:00 PM on the 3rd Monday of the month at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact SIG LEADER Winnie Miller at winnie.miller@att.net

We welcome people new to computers. With practice we hope to make you feel comfortable using the computer at home. Computers are available here for you to continue practicing your new skills on. Feel free to bring any questions and we'll try to answer them for you.

NEW USERS SIG SOUTH

Meets 6:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday of the month at Resurrection Episcopal Church at 4100 Southern Parkway in the Computer Lab. Contact SIG LEADER Charley May at sig@win.net or 773-7155

This SIG is geared to the level of most of the attendees to help them stay on track. We have computers for you to receive hands-on training while watching the presentation on the screen at the front of the room. Time is allotted for questions.

REAL ESTATE SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact SIG LEADER Bill Buzan at re_sig@insightbb.com or 639-7647

The mission of this SIG is to provide property owners and investors the opportunity to gain a greater insight

KIPCUG Special Interest Group Directory (cont.)

into the transaction, so that they can better protect their endeavors more effectively.

TECHNICAL MARKET ANALYSIS SIG

New Location - Meets 6:30 PM on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Old National Bank, 4201 Shelbyville Road, at the corner of Shelbyville Road and Hubbards Lane, in the rear meeting room. Contact SIG LEADER Myron Smith at 897-7718 or mjslks@insightbb.com

We use technical indicators to try to determine the near term direction of the market and hone our skills. The SIG uses a group discussion format to answer everyone's questions and attendees can tell how they use the indicators. We have discussions about the present market and use web-based indicators. Topics of interest are presented at many meetings.

UTILITIES SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 4th Thursday of the month at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact Co-SIG LEADERS Tom McArdle at usersig@insightbb.com or Charley May at sig@win.net or 773-7155

Examining a mix of freeware, shareware and retail programs, this SIG hopes to make your computer experience more enjoyable. Members may bring blank CD's to exchange for free and trial versions of featured utilities.

VISUAL BASIC SIG

Meets 6:30 PM on the 1st Thursday of the month at the LFPL-Bon Air Regional, 2816 Del Rio Place. Contact SIG LEADER Martin Campion at 810-9125 or mccampion@aol.com

This SIG discusses features of the Visual Basic program frequently discussing games that are being developed or VB.Net.

WEBMASTERS SIG

Meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at

Win.Net located at 1048 Chestnut St. Contact SIG LEADER John Henderson at jh@inetmarketing.com or 812-945-1102

KIPCUG and Win.Net have partnered this SIG and select topics of interest to new and experienced web page developers. This KIPCUG event is open to members and non-members interested in creating web sites for personal or commercial use. Each SIG includes tips you may use to improve your web site and a Q&A time. Attendees are encouraged to ask members to constructively review their web pages.

WINDOWS OS SIG

Meets on the 2nd Friday of the month at 6:30 PM at CCUM at 4614 Brownsboro Road (US 42 & Blankenbaker Lane) in the Computer Lab (Room 222). Contact SIG LEADER Bob Rose at britdude@techemail.com or 241-1604

The group will focus on maintaining and updating Windows OS's to keep them performing at peak efficiency. The SIG includes topics covering Windows Operation Systems from Windows 95 through XP-SP2, with an emphasis on changing technology. Time is always reserved to resolve problems and answer questions members bring to the meeting.

HAVE
YOU
VISITED A
SIG
LATELY?

Quality Freeware

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida
<http://www.spcug.org>

I found the article in the July Monitor on "Cost Efficient" software by Joseph Moran to be quite interesting, but noticed that much of the software had a price associated with it. So I thought I'd let you in on the absolutely free software I have been using for the past 2-5 years. In every case I have used it as my standard application for the purpose and, in many cases, totally removed any commercial software that carried out the same function. I have also upgraded the free software when the upgrades became available. All of the software in this article can be obtained without charge by downloading from the various Internet sites I have listed. In every case there is no "trial" period involved.

The foremost item on my list is OpenOffice. I am currently using version 2.0. This version includes word processing, spreadsheet, drawing, database, and presentation software. All of these applications produce documents that are interchangeable with their equivalents in Microsoft Office. OpenOffice will also export documents in either PDF or HTML format. You don't need any PDF software to produce documents that are readable by Adobe Reader (formerly known as Acrobat Reader). Unfortunately it can not open or edit PDF documents. It can open and edit documents in over 25 different formats including HTML, Word Perfect, Word, Adobe PhotoShop, etc. You can obtain your free copy of this software from <http://www.openoffice.org/www.openoffice.org>.

I also recommend Firefox and Thunderbird as free replacements for Internet Explorer and Microsoft's Outlook Express. With the latest versions of Firefox I have not run across any web sites that it can not render correctly. That's not to say that some may exist, I just haven't found them. Firefox will transfer your favorites (bookmarks) from Internet Explorer. As for Thunderbird, it is similar in many ways to Outlook Express, but it includes an RSS Reader that I have found useful. It also filters junk mail and places it in a special folder where you can review it if needed. Otherwise it will be automatically deleted at an interval that you can set. It doesn't remove 100% of the spam, but it does detect about 99% of what comes into my computer. One of the latest additions to Thunderbird is anti-phishing protection. Thunderbird warns you if it suspects that the message might be a scam. Thunderbird can import your address book from Outlook Express. Both Firefox and Thunderbird can be downloaded from www.download.com or if you prefer, from www.mozilla.com/firefox/ and www.mozill.com/thunderbird.

As for anti-virus software, you can't beat Avast for ease of use and automatic updating. After downloading and installing the software it asks you to register. That simply includes giving up your e-mail address, name and postal address. You receive a license to use the software for a year for personal use. At the end of the year you re-register and get another year's free use. Avast is free for personal use, not for businesses or other organizations. However, non-profit organi-

zations can buy Avast at a greatly reduced price. I have used Avast for several years and have installed it on more than 100 other personal computers. In no case have the users had any problems with this software. In addition, Avast does not sell your e-mail or postal address so you get no spam from this registration. Avast quietly updates itself frequently in the background while you continue to work. Then it simply reports that an update has taken place. I have seen days when I have had 3-4 updates in the same day. If you use a dial-up connection instead of cable/DSL, Avast will attempt to update whenever you go on-line. Since the downloads are usually less than 100 KB, they occur rapidly, even on a dial-up connection. The Home edition of Avast can be downloaded from www.avast.com/eng/avast_4_home.html. I recommend using this site instead of download.com as your anti-virus database will be more current.

For a good, reliable firewall I recommend ZoneAlarm. It is also free for personal use. I admit they will try to sell the Pro version when you install it, but the free version is really all you need. That is, assuming you have anti-virus and anti-parasite software installed on your computer. It used to be that dial-up users didn't really have much need for a firewall. However, in today's Internet world, I wouldn't want to connect to the Internet without a good software firewall. While traveling with my laptop, I kept both my anti-virus and firewall updated and running for every connection. ZoneAlarm can be downloaded from www.zonealarm.com. Click on the download link and then the

Quality Freeware (cont.)

ZoneAlarm tab.

As for anti-parasite software, I have to agree with Mr. Moran. Ad-Aware SE and Spybot S&D are two that I keep on both my computers. But that isn't enough. You have to run them regularly to insure you are not infected. I run mine a minimum of once each week. Both of these can be downloaded from download.com. Spybot also has an immunization function that can prevent some parasites from installing themselves on your system. Another immunization application that I use is Spyware Blaster. It makes changes to your registry that prevents parasites from installing. At the present their database lists more than 5,000 items. Using these three anti-parasite/anti-trojan products will certainly upgrade your security and they are all free. Spyware Blaster can be downloaded from download.com or www.javacool-software.com.

For general photo editing I use Google's Picasa. It is not just a photo organizer. I use it to download photos from my camera and organize them into folders. It can also be used to edit photos, print photos and e-mail them. You can make CDs, add captions or post photos on web sites. The advantage of Picasa over other photo software is that it is free. It can be downloaded from download.com or <http://picasa.google.com>. It does not have all the bells and whistles of applications like Photoshop or ULEAD's PhotoImpact, but it is more than adequate for most non-professional purposes.

You may not need screen capture software very often, but when you do, you really need it. I use

MWSnap. It allows you to capture an entire screen or part of it. What you capture can be saved to a file, printed, or edited. It may take you a little time to get accustomed to the interface. But you can't damage anything by playing with it. Once you are familiar with all the controls, it really does copy any part of your screen. Again, this is freeware and can be downloaded from www.mirekw.com/winfreeware/index.html.

Have you ever considered that you might need an inventory of the items in your home for the purposes of making an insurance claim? Considering that we live in Florida where there are many electrical storms, to say nothing of hurricanes, damage to your home could occur at any time. Can you list the contents of every room and the value of each item? Well, the Insurance Information Institute provides free software to assist you in making an inventory and a photographic record of the contents of your house. This software is very easy to use and very important to any homeowner. The software also includes typical lists of things in each type of room. You don't have to use these as you can enter anything you have. You can include place of purchase, date and price, if you have that info. Pictures of items or general pictures of a room can also be added. This software can be downloaded from www.knowyourstuff.org.

There is one more significant software package that I use that is freeware. That is NVu, web-authoring software. Linspire, the company that produces the Linspire Linux software, publishes it. It has a WYSIWYG editor (What You See

Is What You Get) as well as direct editing of the HTML language. It includes the tools for publishing the pages to a web site. You can test the pages against a browser on your computer to insure that everything works properly. It also allows you to add Javascript either directly or in a separate file to your pages. There is a complete tutorial for NVu included on the web that can be downloaded and printed. There is also an NVu user's forum which can be quite helpful. If you have never created a web page before, I think you would find NVu to be just what you need. If you want to see a web site created with NVu, check out www.sandpiperchorus.org. NVu can be downloaded from download.com.

There is one other specialized software package that I have used that some may be interested in trying. This is the Personal Ancestral File (PAF). This is free genealogy recording software provided by the LDS Church (Church of Latter-day Saints). Their website also allows users to search on-line files from the family history archives in Salt Lake City. Although I am not currently using PAF I did use it for a few years before switching to a commercial package. PAF is certainly quite useful for beginning family historians and it can be expanded by purchasing the PAF Companion. If you are interested in trying PAF, download it from www.familysearch.org.

Now that you have all this downloaded freeware, you should make backup copies on either a CD or DVD. Well, for that we have another freeware package, CDBurnerXP Pro. This software will burn CD-R, CD-RW, DVD+R/RW and DVD-

Quality Freeware (cont.)

R/RW. It will burn and create ISO files. It will burn audio discs from mp3, wav, ogg and wma files. It will convert (rip) files on audio discs to wav, mp3, ogg or wma files. It also works with most IDE, USB, Firewire and SCSI burners. It can be downloaded from download.com or www.cdburnerxp.se/download.php. This software does not have a trial period. It is yours for however long you wish to use it. I have been using mine for over two years and have

obtained several updates, one of which added the DVD burner capability.

As you can see from this there is a lot of quality freeware available. If you are interested in finding more, check out the listings at download.com. Just be cautious because many of their listings are trial packages only. You are expected to purchase the total package before the end of your trial period. But there are many "nuggets" on

their very extensive web site. So if you are interested in saving money, try some of these quality freeware items.

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: bwsail@yahoo.com.

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The next General Meeting will be on
Tuesday, October 3, 2006, 6:30 PM Presentation: MS Newest
Operating System, VISTA
Following Ice Cream Social at 6:00 PM
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